

We claim:

- 1 1. A method for providing a reward to a bidder participating in an auction, the  
 2 method comprising:  
 3 identifying a product subject to bidding during an auction session;  
 4 receiving a bid for the product from a bidder during the auction session;  
 5 determining, based on a reward rule, whether the bidder is qualified to receive  
 6 a reward, and if the bidder is qualified:  
 7 transmitting, to the bidder, an indication that the bidder is qualified to  
 8 receive the reward.

- 1 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
 2 determining, based on the bid, whether the bidder is qualified to receive the  
 3 product; and if the bidder is qualified:  
 4 transmitting to the bidder, an indication that the bidder is qualified to  
 5 receive the product.

- 1 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the step of determining, based on the bid,  
 2 whether the bidder is qualified to receive the product, further comprises:  
 3 determining whether the bid is greater than each of a plurality of remaining  
 4 bids.

- 1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the reward comprises at least one of:  
 2 a value of currency, a supplement to the bid, a rebate on the product, an  
 3 amount of frequent flier miles, a second product, and a warranty for the product.

- 1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the reward rule comprises a condition that the  
 2 bidder accept an offer provided by a third party.

- 1 6. The method of claim 5, further comprising:  
 2 transmitting, before the determining step, an offer to the bidder for a second  
 3 product provided by the third party;  
 4 receiving an acceptance of the offer from the bidder; whereby the bidder is  
 5 qualified to receive the reward.

- 1 7. The method of claim 6, wherein the second product is a service.
- 1 8. The method of claim 7, wherein the service is a credit card account and  
2 wherein the third party is a credit card provider.
- 1 9. The method of claim 6, wherein the reward is a supplement to the bid, the  
2 supplement including a value of currency.
- 1 10. The method of claim 5, further comprising:  
2 determining whether the bidder has an acceptable credit history before the  
3 offer is transmitted to the bidder.
- 1 11. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
2 receiving at least one bid for the product from each of a plurality of remaining  
3 bidders.
- 1 12. The method of claim 11, wherein the step of receiving at least one bid is  
2 performed prior to the step of receiving the bid.
- 1 13. The method of claim 12, wherein the reward includes a condition that the bid  
2 from the bidder is greater than each bid received from the plurality of remaining  
3 bidders.
- 1 14. The method of claim 12, further comprising:  
2 determining which of the at least one bids is a greatest bid.
- 1 15. The method of claim 14, wherein the reward rule comprises a condition that  
2 the bid from the bidder is greater than the greatest bid by a predetermined percentage.
- 1 16. The method of claim 14, wherein the reward rule comprises a condition that  
2 the bid from the bidder is greater than the greatest bid by a predetermined currency  
3 value.

1 17. The method of claim 1, wherein the reward rule comprises a condition that the  
2 bid is a first received bid.

1 18. The method of claim 17, wherein the reward is a currency value corresponding  
2 to a value of the bid.

1 19. The method of claim 17, wherein the reward corresponds to a difference  
2 between the bid and a greatest bid.

1 20. The method of claim 1, in which the establishing step comprises:  
2 establishing the reward rule to include a condition that a greatest bid is at least  
3 equal to a predetermined value; and the method further comprising:  
4 receiving a second bid for the product from a second bidder, wherein  
5 the second bid is the greatest bid; and  
6 determining whether the greatest bid is at least equal to the  
7 predetermined value, whereby if the greatest bid is at least equal to the predetermined  
8 value, the bidder is qualified to receive the reward.

1 21. The method of claim 20, wherein the step of determining, based on the  
2 reward rule further comprises:  
3 determining, based on the reward rule, whether the second bidder is  
4 qualified to receive a reward; and if the second bidder is qualified:  
5 transmitting, to the second bidder, an indication that the second bidder  
6 is qualified to receive the reward, whereby if the greatest bid is at least equal to the  
7 predetermined value, the second bidder is qualified to receive the reward.

1 22. The method of claim 1, in which the establishing step further comprises:  
2 establishing the reward rule including a condition that the bid exceed a prior  
3 bid, the method further comprising:  
4 receiving a prior bid, wherein the determining step further comprises:  
5 determining whether the bid is greater than the prior bid; whereby if  
6 the bid is greater than the prior bid, the bidder is qualified to receive the reward.

09223901-123198

1 30. The method of claim 1, in which the establishing step further comprises:

2 establishing the reward rule including a condition that the bidder submits a  
 3 predetermined number of bids, the method further comprising:  
 4 receiving at least one prior bid from the bidder; and wherein the  
 5 determining step further comprises:  
 6 determining whether a number of bids from the bidder, including the  
 7 bid and the at least one prior bid, is at least equal to the predetermined number of  
 8 bids, whereby if the number of bids is at least equal to the predetermined number of  
 9 bids, the bidder is qualified to receive the reward.

1 31. The method of claim 1, in which the establishing step further comprises:  
 2 establishing the reward rule including a condition that a bidder submit at least  
 3 two bids within a predetermined amount of time; the method further comprising:  
 4 receiving a second bid from the bidder; and wherein the determining  
 5 step further comprises:  
 6 determining whether the bid and the second bid were received within  
 7 the predetermined amount of time.

1 32. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
 2 measuring a time between the bid and a previous bid from a second bidder;  
 3 and in which the establishing step further comprises:  
 4 establishing the reward rule including a condition that the bidder is qualified to  
 5 receive the reward when the time is greater than a predetermined value; and wherein  
 6 the determining step further comprises:  
 7 determining whether the time between the bid and the previous bid is  
 8 greater than the predetermined value.

1 33. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
 2 measuring a time between the bid and a previous bid from a second bidder;  
 3 and in which the establishing step further comprises:  
 4 establishing the reward rule including a condition that the bidder is qualified to  
 5 receive the reward when the time is greater than a predetermined value; and wherein  
 6 the determining step further comprises:  
 7 determining whether the time between the bid and the previous bid is  
 8 less than the predetermined value.



1 43. The method of claim 42, wherein the payment is determined from a parallel  
2 auction.

1 44. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
2 receiving, from the bidder, a payment to extend the auction session.

1 45. The method of claim 44, wherein the payment is determined from a parallel  
2 auction.

1 46. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
2 terminating the reward if a higher bid is received from a second bidder.

1 47. The method of claim 1, wherein the reward rule includes a condition that the  
2 reward be issued randomly.

1 48. The method of claim 1, wherein the reward to be offered is determined based  
2 on at least one of:  
3 the bidder's participation history, the bid spread, the product, a statistical  
4 likelihood that the bid will be a greatest bid, and the average highest bid historically  
5 submitted for a similar product.

1 49. The method of claim 1, wherein the receiving step includes:  
2 receiving an encrypted indication of a time the bid was transmitted.

1 50. A method for providing a penalty to a bidder participating in an auction, the  
2 method comprising:  
3 identifying a product subject to bidding during an auction session;  
4 receiving a bid for the product from a bidder during the auction session;  
5 determining, based on a penalty rule, whether the bidder is to receive a  
6 penalty; and if the bidder is to receive the penalty:  
7 transmitting, to the bidder, an indication that the bidder is to receive  
8 the penalty.

1 51. The method of claim 50, wherein the penalty rule comprises a condition that  
2 the bid is less than a current high bid.

1 52. The method of claim 50, wherein the penalty comprises making the bidder  
2 ineligible to continue participating in the auction session.

1 53. The method of claim 50, wherein the penalty rule comprises a condition that  
2 the bid is less than a predetermined value.

1 54. A method for participating in an auction session, comprising:  
2 receiving an identification of a product subject to bidding during an auction  
3 session;  
4 transmitting a bid for the product to an auctioneer during the auction session;  
5 and  
6 receiving a reward in response to the bid.

1 55. The method of claim 54, further comprising:  
2 receiving the product in response to the bid.

1 56. The method of claim 54, wherein the product is a service.

1 57. The method of claim 54, wherein the transmitting step is conducted over one  
2 of a telecommunications network and the Internet.

1 58. The method of claim 54, wherein the transmitting step includes:  
2 transmitting the bid with an encrypted indication of a time the bid was  
3 transmitted.

1 59. A method for participating in an auction session, comprising:  
2 receiving an identification of a product subject to bidding during an auction  
3 session;  
4 transmitting a bid for the product to an auctioneer during the auction session;  
5 and  
6 receiving a penalty in response to the bid.



1 60. A computer data signal embodied in a carrier wave comprising a segment  
2 having computer processing instructions for notifying a bidder that the bidder is  
3 qualified to receive a reward in response to a previous bid submitted during an auction  
4 session.

1 61. An apparatus for providing a reward to a bidder participating in an auction,  
2 comprising:  
3 means for identifying a product subject to bidding during an auction session;  
4 means for receiving a bid for the product from a bidder during the auction  
5 session;  
6 means for determining, based on a reward rule, whether the bidder is qualified  
7 to receive a reward, and  
8 means for transmitting, to the bidder, an indication that the bidder is qualified  
9 to receive the reward.

1 62. An apparatus for providing a reward to a bidder participating in an auction,  
2 comprising:  
3 a storage device; and  
4 a processor connected to the storage device,  
5 the storage device storing a program for controlling the processor; and  
6 the processor operative with the program to:  
7 identify a product subject to bidding during an auction session;  
8 receive a bid for the product from a bidder during the auction session;  
9 determine, based on a reward rule, whether the bidder is qualified to  
10 receive a reward, and if the bidder is qualified:  
11 transmit, to the bidder, an indication that the bidder is qualified to  
12 receive the reward.

1 63. A computer readable medium encoded with processing instructions for  
2 implementing a method for providing a reward to a bidder participating in an auction,  
3 the method comprising:  
4 identifying a product subject to bidding during an auction session;  
5 receiving a bid for the product from a bidder during the auction session;

determining, based on a reward rule, whether the bidder is qualified to receive a reward, and if the bidder is qualified:

transmitting, to the bidder, an indication that the bidder is qualified to receive the reward.

64. An apparatus for providing a penalty to a bidder participating in an auction, comprising:

means for identifying a product subject to bidding during an auction session;

means for receiving a bid for the product from a bidder during the auction

session;

means for determining, based on a penalty rule, whether the bidder is to receive a penalty; and

means for transmitting, to the bidder, an indication that the bidder is to receive the penalty.

65. An apparatus for providing a penalty to a bidder participating in an auction, comprising:

a storage device; and

a processor connected to the storage device,

the storage device storing a program for controlling the processor; and

the processor operative with the program to:

identify a product subject to bidding during an auction session;

receive a bid for the product from a bidder during the auction session;

determine, based on a penalty rule, whether the bidder is to receive a penalty; and if the bidder is to receive the penalty:

transmit, to the bidder, an indication that the bidder is to receive the penalty.

66. A computer readable medium encoded with processing instructions for implementing a method for providing a penalty to a bidder participating in an auction, the method comprising:

identifying a product subject to bidding during an auction session;

receiving a bid for the product from a bidder during the auction session;

6 determining, based on a penalty rule, whether the bidder is to receive a  
7 penalty; and if the bidder is to receive the penalty:  
8 transmitting, to the bidder, an indication that the bidder is to receive  
9 the penalty

56  
pg 1

09223901.123198